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County Employment and Wages in New Mexico – Fourth Quarter 2016

New Mexico's only large county, Bernalillo, reported an employment increase of 1.2 percent from December 2015 to December 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with 2015 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that the rate of employment growth in Bernalillo County matched the national average. (See [table 1](#).)

From December 2015 to December 2016, employment rose in 280 of the 344 largest U.S. counties as national employment increased 1.2 percent. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.1 percent over the year. Lafayette, La., registered the largest percentage employment decline among large counties, down 5.1 percent.

Employment in Bernalillo County stood at 327,800 in December 2016, accounting for 40.4 percent of total employment in New Mexico. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.8 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County was \$895 in the fourth quarter of 2016, ranking it 247th among the 344 large U.S. counties. Among the large U.S. counties, 71 percent (243) reported average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,067. Cameron, Texas, reported the lowest weekly wage (\$640), followed by Hidalgo, Texas (\$648) and Horry, S.C. (\$654).

Nationally, 100 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2016. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,365. New York, N.Y., was second at \$2,212, followed by San Mateo, Calif., at \$2,098. Average weekly wages in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif., were more than three times the average weekly wage in the lowest-ranked county, Cameron, Texas (\$640).

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County declined 1.4 percent from the fourth quarter of 2015 to the fourth quarter of 2016, ranking it 149th among the largest U.S. counties. Nationally, average weekly wages fell 1.5 percent over the year, as 290 of the 344 largest counties registered decreases. McLean, Ill., had the largest wage decline, down 9.2 percent from the fourth quarter of 2015. Clay, Mo., had the second-largest decline with an average weekly wage loss of 8.3 percent, followed by Lafayette, La., down 8.0 percent.

Among the 344 large U.S. counties, 48 experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest percentage increase in average weekly wages with a gain of 11.3 percent, followed by Washington, Pa. (4.9 percent); Marin, Calif. (4.3 percent); and Elkhart, Ind. (4.0 percent).

Average weekly wages in New Mexico's smaller counties

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 32 counties in New Mexico with employment levels below 75,000. Two of these smaller counties had average weekly wages above the \$1,067 national average in the fourth quarter of 2016: Los Alamos (\$1,479) and Eddy (\$1,133). Three other smaller counties had wage levels greater than \$900 per week: De Baca (\$942), Santa Fe (\$926), and Lea (\$918). Catron County had the lowest average wage in the state at \$520 per week. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 33 counties in New Mexico were considered, 6 had weekly wages averaging \$599 or less, 15 averaged \$600 to \$699 per week, 5 reported wages from \$700 to \$799, and 7 had wages averaging \$800 or more. (See [chart 1](#).) The counties with the highest average wages were concentrated around the metropolitan areas of Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Farmington, Hobbs, Los Alamos, and Santa Fe.

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit www.bls.gov/cew.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2015 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm. The 2016 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2017.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.

Upcoming Industry Changes to QCEW Data

Beginning with the release of first quarter 2017 data, the program will switch to the 2017 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as the basis for the assignment and tabulation of economic data by industry. For more information on the change, please see the Federal Register notice at www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/federal_register_notices/notices/fr08au16.pdf.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.9 million employer reports cover 143.7 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in

the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the largest county in New Mexico, fourth quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	143,749.9	1.2	--	\$1,067	--	-1.5	--
New Mexico	811.4	0.0	--	844	45	-2.5	41
Bernalillo, N.M.	327.8	1.2	172	895	247	-1.4	149

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in New Mexico, 4th quarter 2016

Area	Employment December 2016	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	143,749,910	\$1,067
New Mexico	811,360	844
Bernalillo	327,844	895
Catron	629	520
Chaves	21,573	681
Cibola	7,880	679
Colfax	4,635	610
Curry	17,172	705
De Baca	457	942
Dona Ana	72,293	717
Eddy	26,307	1,133
Grant	9,044	731
Guadalupe	1,537	582
Harding	157	691
Hidalgo	1,579	703
Lea	27,870	918
Lincoln	6,300	594
Los Alamos	15,938	1,479
Luna	7,201	656
McKinley	21,006	640
Mora	691	595
Otero	17,673	688
Quay	2,509	605
Rio Arriba	9,719	627
Roosevelt	5,881	662
Sandoval	28,809	766
San Juan	47,215	842
San Miguel	8,181	575
Santa Fe	61,412	926
Sierra	3,390	581
Socorro	5,343	698
Taos	11,188	606
Torrance	3,165	644
Union	1,343	642
Valencia	13,843	616

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	143,749.9	1.2	1067	--	-1.5	--
Alabama	1,932.6	0.7	901	35	-1.3	21
Alaska	310.0	-1.9	1038	17	-5.2	51
Arizona	2,760.1	2.1	945	25	-2.2	34
Arkansas	1,205.4	0.4	827	47	-1.4	22
California	16,923.3	1.9	1271	5	-0.3	4
Colorado	2,588.6	2.0	1086	12	-1.5	24
Connecticut	1,685.5	0.0	1289	4	-3.4	46
Delaware	441.2	-0.1	1055	15	-2.9	44
District of Columbia	760.9	0.5	1763	1	0.6	2
Florida	8,538.9	2.7	942	27	-1.8	28
Georgia.....	4,349.3	2.4	993	20	-0.9	14
Hawaii.....	658.3	0.7	954	24	-0.3	4
Idaho	691.6	3.2	800	50	-0.4	8
Illinois	5,947.6	0.4	1122	9	-2.0	31
Indiana.....	3,021.7	0.9	883	38	-0.9	14
Iowa	1,542.0	0.1	911	33	-1.0	16
Kansas	1,384.5	0.1	877	39	-2.2	34
Kentucky.....	1,894.2	0.6	874	41	-1.4	22
Louisiana	1,907.4	-1.6	914	32	-2.9	44
Maine.....	602.6	0.8	855	43	-2.1	33
Maryland.....	2,666.7	1.0	1169	7	-0.4	8
Massachusetts	3,530.4	1.3	1352	2	-2.4	39
Michigan	4,283.0	1.5	1026	19	-1.6	25
Minnesota.....	2,839.7	1.2	1062	14	-1.1	18
Mississippi.....	1,134.0	0.0	756	51	-1.8	28
Missouri	2,783.2	0.9	918	31	-1.7	27
Montana	456.5	0.7	822	48	0.5	3
Nebraska	972.4	0.0	876	40	-0.5	10
Nevada	1,307.8	2.7	924	29	-1.2	20
New Hampshire.....	656.9	1.3	1092	10	-4.1	48
New Jersey.....	4,042.1	1.4	1239	6	-1.9	30
New Mexico	811.4	0.0	844	45	-2.5	41
New York	9,332.5	1.2	1342	3	-2.3	36
North Carolina	4,326.3	1.8	932	28	-0.7	13
North Dakota	414.4	-3.2	978	21	-4.2	49
Ohio	5,365.6	0.7	943	26	-2.3	36
Oklahoma	1,587.7	-1.2	864	42	-3.5	47
Oregon	1,860.7	2.4	970	22	-1.0	16
Pennsylvania	5,799.8	0.7	1039	16	-2.3	36
Rhode Island	478.3	0.0	1027	18	-1.6	25
South Carolina.....	2,024.3	1.8	855	43	-0.6	12
South Dakota.....	419.9	0.5	828	46	-0.5	10
Tennessee	2,947.5	1.8	970	22	-1.1	18
Texas	11,974.7	1.2	1072	13	-2.5	41
Utah	1,415.1	2.9	910	34	-0.3	4
Vermont.....	312.6	0.1	897	36	-2.4	39
Virginia.....	3,831.6	0.6	1091	11	-0.3	4
Washington.....	3,227.9	2.8	1150	8	1.7	1
West Virginia	693.1	-1.6	809	49	-2.5	41
Wisconsin	2,842.4	0.5	924	29	-2.0	31
Wyoming	265.8	-3.9	894	37	-4.7	50
Puerto Rico.....	928.2	-0.3	555	(3)	-1.9	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	38.5	0.2	769	(3)	-1.8	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

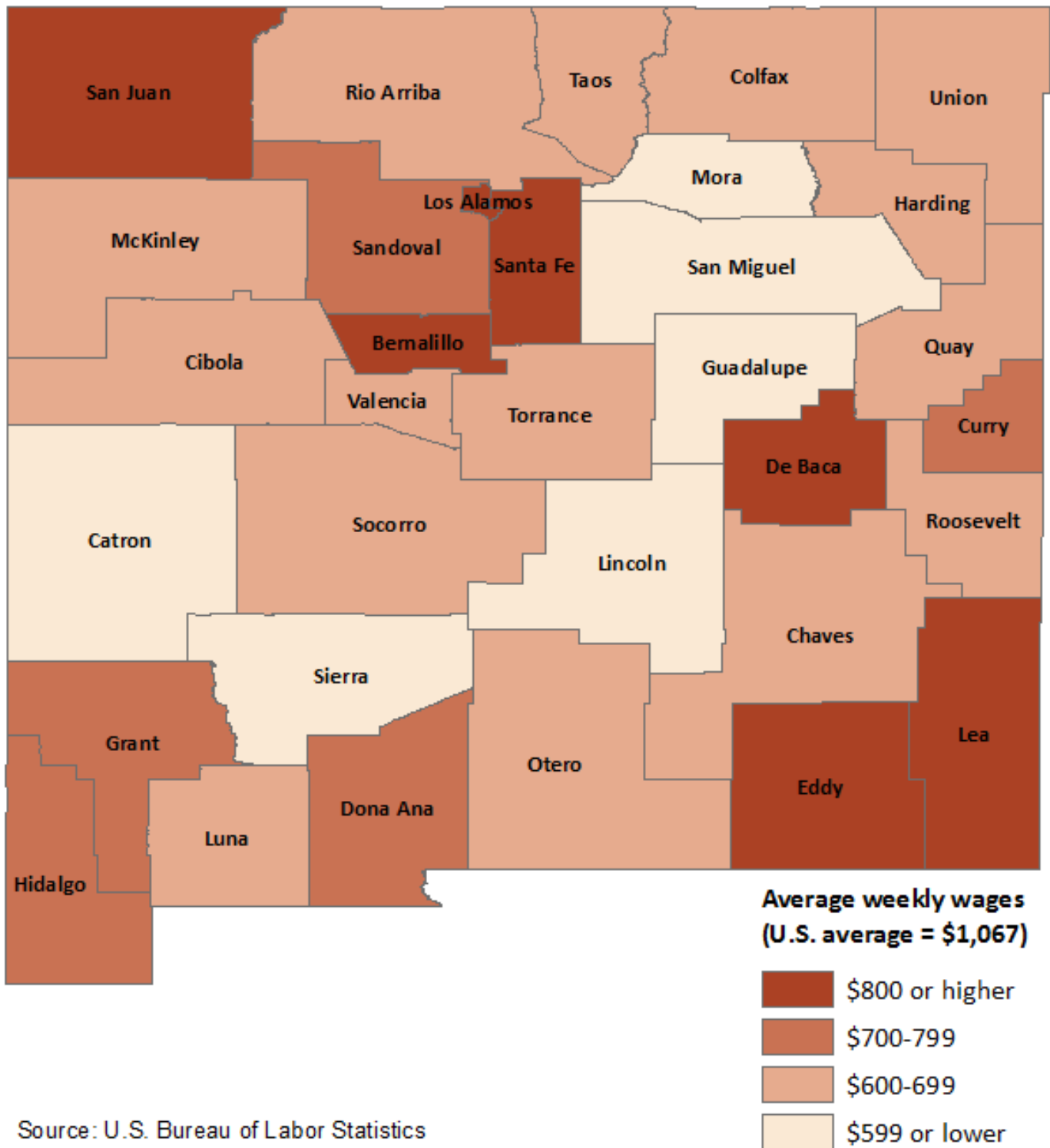
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in New Mexico, 4th quarter 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics